(b) In its report, the Jaswant Singh Commission suggested the broad principles and criteria to be followed while deciding the question of expedienc and desirability of establishement of a Bench of a High Court away from the principal seat and the factors to be kept in view in selecting the venue of the said Bench. The report of the Commission was placed in the Parliament Library on 15.10.86 and was laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha on 20.4.87 and 21.4.87 respectively, which may be referred to. The question of opening a High Court bench is considered by the Central Government in the light of these principles and criteria as and when a proposal is received from the State Government in consultation with the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court.

Besides, the Supreme Court in its judgement dated 24th July, 2000 on a writ petition filed by the Federation of Bar Associations in Karnataka for establishment of a permanent Bench of the Karnataka High Court at any suitable place in northern Karnataka observed that the High Court is the best suited machinery to decide whether it is necessary and feasible to have a bench outside the principal seat of that High Court.

(c) and (d) No complete proposal has been received from Government of Kerala in consultation with the Chief Justice of Kerala High Court for establishing a bench of High Court at Thiruvananthapuram.

Vacancies of Judges in High Courts and Supreme Court

858. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of vacancies of Judges in various High Courts and the Supreme Court as on date; and

(b) the action Government have taken for filling these vacancies and also those vacancies which are due to arise in the next six months so that the vacancies may be filled on time?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) As on 25-7-2001, the

vacancy position in respect of Judges in various High Courts and the Supreme Court of India was as follows:

(i) High Courts : 175

(ii) Supreme Court : 2

(b) The filling up of vacancies in the Supreme Court of India and the High Courts is a consultative process among the Constitutional authorities. While every effort is made to fill up the existing vacancies expeditiously, vacancies do keep on arising on account of retirement, resignation or elevation of Judges.

Disappearance of Companies after collecting funds

†859. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that many companies disappeared after collecting funds from the market;

(b) if so, the total number of such companies;

(c) the details thereof, State-wise;

(d) whether Government have detected such companies and taken any action against them; and

(e) if so, the number of such companies against whom action was taken till June, 2001?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 229 companies (As identified by the Securities and Exchange Board of India).

(c) The details of these companies State-wise are given in the Statement (*see* below).

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) Prosecution have been filed against 112 companies, 26 companies are under liquidation, 69 are regular in filing their

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.